

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. – 6. (Canceled)

7. (New) An isolated nucleic acid encoding an alkaline protease having an amino acid sequence which is at least 90% homologous to an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1, wherein said isolated alkaline protease has alkaline protease activity.

8. (New) A microorganism which is transformed with the nucleic acid of claim 7 and produces the alkaline protease.

9. (New) The microorganism of claim 8, which is a bacteria.

10. (New) The microorganism of claim 8, which is a yeast.

11. (New) The microorganism of claim 8, which is a fungus.

12. (New) The microorganism of claim 8, which is gram-positive.

13. (New) The microorganism of claim 8, which is gram-negative.

14. (New) The microorganism of claim 8, which is Eschericia coli.

15. (New) The microorganism of claim 8, which belongs to the genus Bacillus.

16. (New) The microorganism of claim 8, which belongs to the genus Saccharomyces.

17. (New) The microorganism of claim 8, which belongs to the genus Aspergillus.

18. (New) The microorganism of claim 8, which is selected from the group consisting of (1) Bacillus sp. KSM-KP 43, deposited under the accession number FERM BP-6532, (2) Bacillus sp. KSM-KP 1790, deposited under the accession number FERM BP-6533, and (3) Bacillus sp. KSM KP-9860, deposited under the accession number FERM BP-6534.

19. (New) A method of producing the microorganism of claim 8, comprising transforming a microorganism with the nucleic acid.

20. (New) A method of producing the alkaline protease of claim 7, comprising culturing a microorganism which produces the alkaline protease in a culture medium and then isolating the alkaline protease from the culture medium.

21. (New) An isolated nucleic acid encoding an alkaline protease having an amino acid sequence which is at least 90% homologous to an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2, wherein said isolated alkaline protease has alkaline protease activity.

22. (New) A microorganism which is transformed with the nucleic acid of claim 21 and produces the alkaline protease.

23. (New) The microorganism of claim 22, which is a bacteria.

24. (New) The microorganism of claim 22, which is a yeast.

25. (New) The microorganism of claim 22, which is a fungus.

26. (New) The microorganism of claim 22, which is gram-positive.

27. (New) The microorganism of claim 22, which is gram-negative.

28. (New) The microorganism of claim 22, which is Eschericia coli.

29. (New) The microorganism of claim 22, which belongs to the genus Bacillus.

30. (New) The microorganism of claim 22, which belongs to the genus Saccharomyces.

31. (New) The microorganism of claim 22, which belongs to the genus Aspergillus.

32. (New) The microorganism of claim 22, which is selected from the group consisting of (1) Bacillus sp. KSM-KP 43, deposited under the accession number FERM BP-6532, (2) Bacillus sp. KSM-KP 1790, deposited under the accession number FERM BP-6533, and (3) Bacillus sp. KSM KP-9860, deposited under the accession number FERM BP-6534.

33. (New) A method of producing the microorganism of claim 22, comprising transforming a microorganism with the nucleic acid.

34. (New) A method of producing the alkaline protease of claim 21, comprising culturing a microorganism which produces the alkaline protease in a culture medium and then isolating the alkaline protease from the culture medium.

SUPPORT FOR THE AMENDMENTS

Claims 1-6 have been canceled.

Claims 7-34 have been added.

Support for new Claims 7-34 can be found in the Claims 1-6 as originally filed, as well as the specification at pages 2-45.

The specification has been amended to insert and/or clarify the sequence identifiers.

No new matter has been added by the present amendment.